



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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## **ZANDON 3-1 MORNING-LINE FAVORITE FOR SATURDAY'S \$3 MILLION KENTUCKY DERBY PRESENTED BY WOODFORD RESERVE**

**LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Monday, May 2, 2022)** – Jeff Drown's **Zandon**, authoritative winner of the Blue Grass Stakes (GI) in his most recent start, has been installed as the 3-1 morning-line favorite in a field of 20 horses plus two also-eligibles entered for Saturday's 148th running of the \$3 million Kentucky Derby Presented by Woodford Reserve (GI).

The winner's share for Derby 148 will be \$1,860,000.

The Kentucky Derby, with live coverage provided by NBC from 2:30-7:30 p.m. (all times Eastern), will go as the 12th race on Saturday's 14-race program that features eight stakes. Post time for the Derby is 6:57 with first post time Derby Day being 10:30 a.m.

Trained by **Chad Brown**, Zandon notched his first stakes victory at Keeneland in the Blue Grass with **Flavien Prat** aboard for the first time. Prior to the Blue Grass, Zandon had finished third behind Epicenter in the Risen Star.

Prat will be seeking a second Derby victory to go with Country House in 2019. He and Zandon will break from post position 10.

**Winchell Thoroughbreds' Epicenter** is the 7-2 second choice on the morning line.

Trained by **Steve Asmussen**, Epicenter broke his maiden at Churchill Downs in his second start last November and this winter dominated at Fair Grounds with a victory in the Gun Runner that was followed by a narrow defeat in the Lecomte (GIII).

**Joel Rosario**, who has been aboard for Epicenter's past three starts, has the call Saturday as he seeks a second Derby victory to go with the triumph aboard **Orb** in 2013. Epicenter will break from post position three.

Owned by the partnership of **SF Racing, Starlight Racing, Madaket Stables, Robert Masterson, Jay Schoenfarber, Waves Edge Capital, Catherine Donovan, Golconda Stable and Siena Farm, Messier** is the third choice on the morning line at 8-1.

Trained by **Tim Yakteen**, Messier enters the Derby off a runner-up finish in the Santa Anita Derby (GI). Messier will break from post position six under three-time Derby winner **John Velazquez**. Velazquez's Derby wins came with **Animal Kingdom** (2011), **Always Dreaming** (2017) and **Authentic** (2020).

Yakteen also will send out **Zedan Racing Stable's Taiba** (12-1).

Winner of the Santa Anita Derby (GI) in just his second career start, Taiba will be trying to become the first horse to win the Kentucky Derby in just his third start since **Leonatus** in 1883.

Taiba will break from post position 12 and be ridden by two-time Derby winner Mike Smith. Smith won the 2005 Run for the Roses on Giacomo and the 2018 renewal on Triple Crown winner Justify.

Co-fourth choices on the morning line at 10-1 are **Donegal Racing's** Wood Memorial (GII) winner **Mo Donegal** and **C2 Racing Stable and La Milagrosa Stable's White Abarrio**, winner of the Florida Derby (GI).

Trained by two-time Kentucky Derby winner **Todd Pletcher**, Mo Donegal will be ridden by **Irad Ortiz Jr.** and break from post position one.

Pletcher, who won the Derby in 2010 with **Super Saver** and in 2017 with Always Dreaming, will have two other starters in the race in **Whisper Hill Farm's Charge It** and **Sumaya U. S. Stables' Pioneer of Medina**.

Charge It (20-1), runner-up in the Florida Derby (GI) in his most recent start, will be ridden by **Luis Saez** and break from post position eight. Pioneer of Medina (30-1), third to Epicenter in the Louisiana Derby in his most recent start, will be ridden by **Joe Bravo** and break from post position 11.

Trained by **Saffie Joseph Jr.**, White Abarrio will break from post position 15 and be ridden by **Tyler Gaffalione**.

In addition to Pletcher, three other trainers will be trying to add to their Derby victory totals.

Two-time winner **Doug O'Neill**, trainer of **I'll Have Another** in 2012 and **Nyquist** in 2016, will send out **Calumet Farm's Happy Jack** (30-1). **Rafael Bejarano** has the mount and will break from post position two.

**Brad Cox** and jockey **Florent Geroux**, who teamed up to win the 2021 Derby with **Mandaloun**, are back with **Gold Square's** Arkansas Derby (GI) winner **Cyberknife** (20-1). Cyberknife will break from post position 16.

Cox will have two other entrants in the gate in **Barry and Joni Butzow's Zozos** (20-1) who will break from post position 19 under **Manny Franco** and **Peachtree Stable's Tawny Port** (30-1) who will be ridden by **Ricardo Santana Jr.** and break from post position 18.

Four-time Derby winner **D. Wayne Lukas** will send out **Julie Gilbert** and **Aaron Sones' Ethereal Road** (30-1). **Luis Contreras** will be aboard and break from post position 20 as Ethereal Road attempts to join **Winning Colors** (1988), **Thunder Gulch** (1995), **Grindstone** (1996) and **Charismatic** (1999) as Lukas Derby winners.

The field for the 148th Kentucky Derby Presented by Woodford Reserve, with riders and morning-line odds from the rail out, is: Mo Donegal (Irad Ortiz Jr., 10-1), Happy Jack (Rafael Bejarano, 30-1), Epicenter (Joel Rosario, 7-2), **Summer Is Tomorrow** (Mickael Barzalona, 30-1), **Smile Happy** (Corey Lanerie, 20-1), Messier (John Velazquez, 8-1), **Crown Pride (JPN)** (Christophe Lemaire, 20-1), Charge It (Luis Saez, 20-1), **Tiz the Bomb** (Brian Hernandez Jr., 30-1), Zandon (Flavien Prat, 3-1), Pioneer of Medina (Joe Bravo, 30-1), Taiba (Mike Smith, 12-1), **Simplification** (Jose Ortiz, 20-1), **Barber Road** (Rey Gutierrez, 30-1), White Abarrio (Tyler Gaffalione, 10-1), Cyberknife (Florent Geroux, 20-1), **Classic Causeway** (Julien Leparoux, 30-1), Tawny Port (Ricardo Santana Jr., 30-1), Zozos (Manny Franco, 20-1) and Ethereal Road (Luis Contreras, 30-1). Also-Eligibles: **Rich Strike** (Sonny Leon, 30-1), **Rattle N Roll** (James Graham, 30-1). All starters will carry 126 pounds.

#### **ABOUT CHURCHILL DOWNS RACETRACK**

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